

Academy's F-86F vs Tamiya's MiG-15



By Dick Smith

The North American Aviation F-86 Sabres and the Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15's that dueled in the skies over North Korea in the early 1950s were considered almost equally matched. The Sabres were faster but the MiG's were more agile. The MiG's carried heavier firepower with one 37mm and two 23mm cannons. The Sabres were armed with six .50 caliber machine guns.

Captain Joseph M. McConnell flew an "F" model of the famous F-86 in his clash with Russian Captain Semyon A. Fedorets. Academy's 1/48th scale F-86F kit, #2183, is an accurate representation of the American ace's fighter and comes with a decal sheet complete with the misspelled "Beautious Butch II" legend and 16 victory markings painted below the cockpit.

The cockpits of "F" models of the Sabre were painted dark gull gray, FS-36231, with a semi-gloss black instrument panel and side consoles. The seats had cushions of khaki green and headrests in flat red. Color drawings and photos of F-86F cockpits are pictured throughout the Squadron/Signal publication "Walk Around, F-86 Sabre, No. 21." A color painting of Captain McConnell's fighter is featured on the cover.

After completing the cockpit, you'll have to decide if your model will be displayed with the jet engine exposed and the rear fuselage supported on a maintenance stand. I chose to show my model ready for flight. The cockpit sits on top of the forward portion of the engine intake duct. To counter the tail heaviness of the

model, epoxy some fishing sinkers or BB's in the space behind the instrument panel. This will keep the model from "tail sitting."

Paint the interior of the duct silver before gluing it together. Next assemble the rear portion of the engine to the jet exhaust pipe and align it with the aft portion of the fuselage. This may seem like a lot of work for parts that will be hidden but failure to take these steps will result in "a toy-like see-through" of the fuselage.



Carefully trap the cockpit, front engine duct and the rear jet exhaust assembly into one side of the fuselage. Check the positioning of all the parts and then cement the two sides together. Glue the wings together and attach them to the fuselage. Position the elevators in the slots provided and glue them into place being careful to maintain the proper dihedral.

The machine gun bays can be displayed open, with the six ".50's" in place. The basic construction is now complete. Check over your work and sand and fill any seams or joints. Korean War F-86's were delivered with an unpainted aluminum "skin" that served as a background for colorful personal and unit markings.

To duplicate the aluminum finish, all flaws in the plastic and construction imperfections will have to be sanded smooth and the surface primed. Gunze Sangyo's "Mr. Surfacer 1000" and very fine (1000 grade) wet and dry sandpaper will allow you to obtain a flawless surface on the plastic. (This grade of sandpaper can be found at auto supply stores.)

To achieve the “look” of natural metal, I sprayed several light coats of Alclad II’s “aluminum” over the entire model. When dry, I masked off selected panels with pieces of adhesive strips from “Post It Note” pads and sprayed “duraluminum,” “magnesium” and “white aluminum” Alclad II to selected areas to duplicate various shades of metal.



Complete the painting of your model by spraying the inside of the airbrakes and wheel wells with “interior green,” FS-34151, the fin cap “aircraft gray,” FS-15437, and the wheels, “tire black.”

All of the markings for Captain McConnell’s jet are included on the kit decals. The yellow identification bands for the wings and fuselage require several applications of decal setting solution to get them to settle down properly. (The yellow identification bands are somewhat transparent and should be “painted on.”)

Captain McConnell’s adversary in the “Clash of Titans” was WWII veteran Russian pilot, Capt. Semyon Fedorets. For his aircraft we’ll use the 1/48th scale MiG-15bis kit from Tamiya. Construction starts with painting the tub and sidewalls of the cockpit light blue, “Hellblau-RLM-76.” The seat is semi-gloss black with dark green cushions. Strips of masking tape make up the seat harness.

Epoxy the metal cylinder, included in the kit, into place above the nose wheel well. This weight insures the model stands properly on its landing gear. If you chose not to display your model with the engine exposed, skip ahead in the instructions and cement the forward intake trunk and tail pipe into one of the fuselage sides. The wings and elevators fit easily into their slots in the fuselage. The instructions clearly outline the rest of the construction steps.



Information on the aircraft and the Russians who piloted them during the Korean War is extremely limited. We know that Captain Fedorets was assigned to the 913th IAP of the 32nd Fighter Division of the Soviet Far Eastern Air Force.

Mushroom Model Publications, “*Mikojan Gurievitch MiG-15*” clearly shows on page 112 that Fedorets’ MiG-15 was painted in a three color camouflage scheme of sand, (approx. RLM-79), military brown, (approx. FS-30219), and dark green (approx. FS-34079.) A color profile shows the camouflage painted in an irregular pattern over the topside of the aircraft while the underside was light blue, a close match to “French dark blue gray.” These colors are not exact matches since as sources say the paint was randomly mixed from materials on hand. An additional source of information on the Fedorets’ MiG-15 can be found on the website: www.acepilots.com/russian/rus_aces.html.

Russian pilots flew their aircraft with the North Korean red star in six positions. The full color insignia came from AeroMaster, Korean War Aces, Part II, sheet 48-230. The “393” ID numbers on the nose came from a sheet of HisAirDec red letters and numbers. Some drawings show Fedoret’s aircraft with only the red numerals “93” on the nose, leaving off the first “3.” (Who knows?)

Complete your MiG by painting and attaching the landing gear, flaps and antenna. A light spray of Testor's Dulcoat will seal the decals and give the model a "weathered look" resulting from the harsh North Korean climate.

The finished models can be posed head to head for a miniature restaging of the "Clash of Titans."

